

2016 VCE Dance written examination report

General comments

The 2016 Dance written examination consisted of six questions that comprised short-answer questions, questions where students were required to respond in table format, scenario-based questions and extended-response questions. All questions were compulsory. Questions 4, 5 and 6 related to dance works selected from the prescribed list of dance works published annually on the Dance study page of the VCAA website. Teachers are reminded that the list changes each year; therefore, it is important to carefully check the list at the start of each year before deciding on the selection of works to be studied. Generally responses indicated that students had studied appropriate works from the current prescribed list.

Specific information

Note: Student responses reproduced in this report have not been corrected for grammar, spelling or factual information.

This report provides sample answers or an indication of what answers may have included. Unless otherwise stated, these are not intended to be exemplary or complete responses.

The statistics in this report may be subject to rounding resulting in a total more or less than 100 per cent.

Question 1

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average
%	2	2	7	11	21	19	38	4.6

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of rehearsal practices in solo dance works. It required a description of at least two relevant rehearsal practices capable of enhancing the student's execution of solo choreography.

High-scoring responses presented a comprehensive, well-developed and articulate description of at least two relevant rehearsal practices that were linked to how the student's execution of solo choreography was enhanced.

Examples of relevant rehearsal practices could have included (but were not limited to):

- marking the dance
- use of the studio mirror
- receiving and responding to feedback from, for example, teachers or other students
- taping and evaluating
- repeating or practicing.

'Execution of the solo choreography' is a broad term and could include many possibilities – improving muscle memory, use of space, artistry, performance skills (eye/body focus, projection), etc.

Low-scoring responses:

- confused rehearsal practices with movement creation processes, pre-performance practices and/or performance practices
- lacked adequate detail about the stated process and/or included a list of practices
- did not link the stated process to how it enhanced the solo choreography.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Mark through of phrases:

By slowly marking through the phrases of the choreography the dancer is able to clarify the orientation and pathways or where the movements travel in the space to gain a better understanding of the use of direction and how it relates to the expressive intention. This allows for adjustment and refinement to facilitate a more expressive execution of space.

Use of studio mirror:

Rehearsing parts of the dance in front of a studio mirror allows a dancer to see the accuracy of the body shapes and weight placement throughout the phrasing. Evaluating the shapes and use of alignment enables editing to take place through further experimentation to find a more accurate way to reproduce the intended choreography. This will enhance the artistry and allow the movement to look more aesthetically pleasing to the audience.

Refining eye and body focus:

Another rehearsal practice is refining the use of eye and body focus through practicing in front of your teacher or peers. They can make suggestions as to where you are looking or facing in relation to the communication of your intention. This will allow you to make adjustments so the intention is communicated more effectively come performance time.

Question 2

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
%	2	1	5	6	11	14	18	14	17	7	6	6.1

This question assessed students' understanding of how dancers, individually and/collectively, could learn choreography in a learnt group dance context to achieve the five outcomes specified in the table.

It required students to think about how a particular learning process could relate to, or result in, the following five outcomes:

- Individually, and as a group, the dancers have a comprehensive understanding of the expressive intention.
- Individually, each dancer has muscle memory of the movement vocabulary.
- Individually, each dancer is able to safely and accurately execute the movement vocabulary.
- Individually, each dancer is able to physically execute and control the choreographic variations of energy.
- As a group, the dances are able to maintain spacing and orientation in group formations accurately.

High-scoring responses presented detailed and articulate descriptions of relevant learning processes that plausibly resulted in the adjacent outcome in the table.

Low-scoring responses:

- confused learning processes with movement creation processes, rehearsal practices and/or performance practices

- lacked adequate detail about the stated process
- identified a learning process that did not relate to how the adjacent outcome was achieved
- did not demonstrate an understanding of the terminology used in the adjacent outcome in particular the 'control the choreographic variations of energy'.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. The student would have scored more highly if they had included accuracy as part of their response.

Ways dancers could learn the choreography in a learnt group dance work	Outcome
<i>The choreographer can talk to the group before beginning to teach the movement in order to clearly communicate the ideas or intention involved in the choreography. By doing this, students are able to gain a better understanding of the meaning behind each movement, which will help them interpret the expressive qualities as they learn the dance.</i>	Individually, and as a group, the dancers have a comprehensive understanding of the expressive intention
<i>The teacher used counts and names of steps to help the group remember the choreography. Each dancer then repeated or practiced phrases as they were taught. Repeating the choreographed movements using the counts and names of the movements multiple times alone and as a group reinforced the steps to enable accurate execution, transfer the movements from short to long term memory and develop muscle memory.</i>	Individually, each dancer has muscle memory of the movement vocabulary.
<i>Before starting to learn the dance the dancers should engage in a safe dance warm up which involves gentle joint mobilisation, cardio exercises such as jogging and some static stretching. This will enable the muscles and tendons to become more pliable which will decrease the chance of injury and enable each dancer to safely and accurately execute the choreography as it is being taught.</i>	Individually, each dancer is able to safely and accurately execute the movement vocabulary.
<i>As the group learns the dance each dancer should mark through the movement phrases while thinking about the choreographed use of the qualities of movement and resulting force and flow. For example they could think about how they are executing moments of suspension and vibration – as the group comes together the choreographer could compare how accurately and controlled the variations of energy are.</i>	Individually, each dancer is able to physically execute and control the choreographic variations of energy.
<i>The use of peripheral vision when learning the choreography enables the dancers to gain an understanding of the choreographed points in space, the correct spacing between dancers and accurate orientation in all group formations. It enables dancers to line up their position in relation to the front of the space to avoid mishaps and collisions.</i>	As a group, the dancers are able to maintain spacing and orientation in group formations accurately.

Question 3

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	Average
%	4	9	25	33	29	2.8

This question required students to give an explanation of why choreographic devices are essential to a choreographer when creating a dance work. To gain full marks, students needed to present a comprehensive, clear and well-articulated response containing fully developed ideas and detail explaining why choreographic devices are essential when choreographing a dance work.

Choreographic devices are strategies or methods that choreographers use, or that they require their dancers to use, to invent, select and/or arrange the movement vocabulary via which an expressive intention is communicated.

This question asked students to demonstrate an understanding of the role choreographic devices play as an integral part of the creative process when a dance is being choreographed and/or structured.

High-scoring responses either presented a broad approach to explaining why choreographic devices are essential to a choreographer when choreographing a dance work, or detailed a number of specific choreographic devices linked to an explanation that pinpointed the relevance of choreographic devices to the overall choreographic process.

Acceptable answers included:

- to link or form the phrases and sections into a unified composition
- to develop the expressive intention
- to communicate the artistry of the dance
- manipulating tools used to arrange movement vocabulary and communicate the expressive intention.

Low-scoring responses:

- lapsed into an explanation of choreographic devices without addressing why the devices were essential to the creation of a solo work
- created a list of devices
- repeated information
- wrote 'off-task'.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response.

Choreographic devices are essential because they help to link phrases together to form relatable sections that either contrast or complement each other to create a formal structure. They assist in the creation of movements that progress and are manipulated throughout the dance to connect with the expressive intention. An example is the use of a motif. This is a small movement phrase that is repeated in exactly the same way or perhaps abstracted or augmented, etc. to ensure the expressive intention is reinforced and progressed throughout the dance along a logical path. The use of 'choreographic devices' also help extend the movement vocabulary of the choreographer to be more sophisticated and show variety.

Question 4

Work chosen	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
%	0	8	24	32	3	20	2	10	1	0

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	Average
%	1	0	0	0	1	3	2	3	4	5	7	6	5	4	5	7	9	3	8	2	4	6	3	4	2	6	14.8

This question assessed students' knowledge and understanding of the term 'dance design' in one of the prescribed solo works studied in Unit 3.

Students were required to demonstrate an understanding of 'form' and how the choreographer(s) applied this in relation to the structure of the work, plus an analysis of the movement vocabulary

and phrases within the sections and the expressive intention communicated within the selected solo dance work.

A response marked in the top band of marks demonstrated:

- comprehensive analysis of a plausible opinion of the type of form, the number of sections and the arrangement of sections to create a formal structure
- comprehensive analysis of a plausible opinion of the expressive intention and how it develops through the arrangement of movement vocabulary as the sections of the form progress
- detailed description of movement vocabulary from sections throughout the complete solo dance work that supported the opinion provided about the expressive intention
- an excellent understanding and use of all related terminology.

Assessment of Question 3 was based on the following bands of descriptors. Marks were assigned according to the quality, depth, detail and comprehensiveness of the answer.

Descriptors	Band of marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sophisticated and very detailed analysis of the form and the communication of the expressive intention as it develops throughout the order of the sections in the complete prescribed solo dance work selected. • Expressive intention: Perceptive and strongly argued opinion of the expressive intention communicated in the complete dance. In-depth understanding of the development of the expressive intention throughout the work. If the expressive intention is more than a singular idea, detailed articulation of all of the ideas communicated or aspects of the expressive intention communicated in specific sections of the dance. • Form: Demonstration of an in-depth knowledge of what differentiates the movement phrases within sections, the ordering of the sections and how this creates the form the student believes the dance has. Accurate naming of this type of form and a strongly substantiated argument presenting the student's opinion of why they perceive the form in this way. • Movement vocabulary: Inclusion of detailed examples of movement vocabulary within sections from throughout the dance work. These examples describe the movement vocabulary in a sophisticated way. Very clear information about when each example occurs is provided. Examples contain excellent clarity regarding what aspect of the expressive intention is communicated and clearly substantiate and support the student's argument and opinion regarding the form of the dance. 	21–25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent analysis of the form and the communication of the expressive intention as it develops throughout the order of the sections in the majority of the solo dance work selected. Some inconsistencies evident. • Expressive intention: Clear and well-argued opinion of what the expressive intention communicated is. Good understanding of the development of the expressive intention throughout the work or the majority of it. If the expressive intention is more than a singular idea, clear articulation of the majority of ideas communicated or aspects of the expressive intention communicated in specific sections of the dance. • Form: A clear and accurate articulation of what differentiates the movement phrases within the majority of the sections, the order of all or the majority of sections, and how this creates the form the student believes the dance has. Accurate naming of this type of form and a well-substantiated argument presenting the student's opinion of why they perceive the form in this way. • Movement vocabulary: Inclusion of relevant well-chosen examples of movement vocabulary within sections from throughout the complete or majority of the solo dance. The movement vocabulary in these examples is described effectively. Clear information about when the majority of examples occur is provided. 	16–20

<p>Examples clarify what aspect of the expressive intention is communicated at that point and support the student's argument and opinion regarding the form of the dance.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adequate understanding demonstrated through some analysis of the form and the communication of the expressive intention as it develops throughout the order of the sections in the majority, or only some of, the solo dance work selected. Many inconsistencies evident. • Expressive intention: Legitimate but not fully developed opinion of what the expressive intention communicated is. Adequate but sketchy understanding of the development of the expressive intention throughout the majority, or some of, the work. If the expressive intention is more than a singular idea, some outlining of the majority, or some of, the ideas communicated or aspects the expressive intention communicated in specific sections of the dance. • Form: An adequate articulation of what differentiates the movement phrases within the majority, or some of, the sections. A brief description of the order of the majority, or some of, the sections and a basic logic presented in relation to the type of the form the student believes the dance has. Accurate naming of this type of form and some description presenting the student's opinion of why they perceive the form in this way. • Movement vocabulary: Inclusion of an adequate number of examples of movement vocabulary within sections from throughout the majority, or some of, the solo dance. These examples include some satisfactory movement vocabulary description. Basic information about when the majority, or some of, the examples occur is provided. The examples outline the aspect of the expressive intention communicated at that point and will adequately but inconsistently relate to the student's argument and opinion regarding the form of the dance. 	11–15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited, inadequate or poor understanding demonstrated via very little analysis of the form and the communication of the expressive intention as it develops throughout the order of the sections in only some of the dance with very little substantiation or reasoning included. • Expressive intention: Unclear outlining of opinion of what the expressive intention communicated is in the dance or part of the dance. Inadequate understanding of the development of the expressive intention throughout the work. If the expressive intention is more than a singular idea, barely adequate outlining of some of the ideas communicated or aspects of the expressive intention communicated in specific sections of the dance. • Form: Limited knowledge of what differentiates the movement phrases within some of the sections. Very brief description of the order of some of the sections. A borderline logic presented in relation to the type of form the student believes the dance has. If included, the naming of this type of form could be accurate, probable or inaccurate. • Movement vocabulary: Inclusion of a small number of very generalised examples of movement vocabulary within sections from throughout some of the solo dance. These examples include poor or sketchy description of the movement vocabulary. Very basic information about when all, the majority or some of the examples occur is provided. Examples refer inconsistently or minimally to what aspect of the expressive intention is communicated at that point and may or may not relate to the student's argument and opinion regarding the type of form; if they do they will not be linked well. 	6–10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal grasp, or understanding, of the form and the communication of the expressive intention as it develops throughout the sections in a small part(s) of the solo dance work, with little description or reasoning included. Answer consists of a poor description or outline only. • Expressive intention: No, minimal or incomplete outlining of opinion of what the 	1–5

<p>expressive intention communicated is in the dance or part of the dance. Inconsistent/superficial or partially incorrect understanding of the development of the expressive intention throughout the work. If the expressive intention is more than a singular idea, no discussion, or very minimal outlining, of a small percentage of the ideas communicated or aspects of the expressive intention communicated in specific sections of the dance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Form: Minimal knowledge of what differentiates the movement phrases within only some of the sections. If included, inadequate and incomplete brief outlining of some of the sections. If included, the naming of a type of form could be accurate, probable or inaccurate. Any information that presents the student's opinion of why they perceive the form in a particular way is outlined rather than described or analysed.• Movement vocabulary: Inclusion of no, or only a few, references to a small number of incomplete examples of movement vocabulary from some of the solo dance. The description of movement vocabulary in these examples is incorrect or unclear as is information about when in the dance they occur. If included, examples will have no, or very poor and unclear, references to what expressive intention or aspect of it the example communicates. Examples will have little relevance or will not relate to the student's opinion regarding the type of form; if they do they will be linked very poorly.	
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Following is an excerpt of a response typical of band 1. The work being analysed is 'Newspaper Dance' choreographed by Gene Kelly.

'Newspaper Dance' is an exploration of the joy and excitement associated with the main characters new found love Jane. It follows a ternary formal structure as the movement vocabulary and intention unfolds through 3 sections.

Section A is the exploration of Joe's feelings of love and sets the scene for the entire dance. The section begins with pedestrian walks, gestures and small tapping sequences. The initial locomotion and gesture (hands in his pockets) produces an opportunity for the dance routine to commence. The placement of the first motif is imperative to the form as it creates a base phrase from which the movement vocabulary and expressive intention can expand. This motif explores the potential of the creaky floor board as he presses it with the ball of his foot to communicate his curiosity and playfulness. The movement phrases of the section progress to introduce a second motif - stepping on the newspaper. The discovery of the newspaper develops into a phrase which plays with sound and small footwork on and around the paper. The section is added to as he slides and transfers his weight before investigating what he can create with movement and rhythm between both the creak and the newspaper. The combination of these motifs is vital to the form as it sets up the initial stage of the intention and serves as a springboard from which section B is developed. The further addition of small low turns, locomotion and elevation build on the initial motifs as he locomotes to ascend the stairs for the first time and descends with larger locomotor travelling steps. This is the point which builds the momentum for the transition into section B where the movement vocabulary transforms from small explorations into more complex dance phrases and sequences to develop the intention of moving the character into a fantasy world as he becomes overtaken with joyful play.

Question 5

Work chosen	none	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
%	0	2	13	4	0	14	1	14	53

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Average
%	5	2	4	4	4	5	6	6	7	5	7	5	11	9	6	15	9.2

Questions 5 and 6 assessed students' understanding of the prescribed group works studied in Unit 4.

Question 5 required students to describe three movement phrases in terms of the choreographic manipulation of all the elements of spatial organisation (direction, dimension, level and focus) and the communication of the expressive intention.

High-scoring responses comprehensively described the choreographic use of all four elements of spatial organisation in each of three contrasting movement vocabulary examples. They also linked the description to an aspect of the expressive intention in a clear and detailed way.

Lower-scoring responses showed a limited understanding of the analysis of the use of all four elements of spatial organisation in each of three contrasting movement vocabulary examples, and the expressive intention, or aspects of the expressive intention, communicated in each movement example was either not described in detail or was not linked to the movement vocabulary and arrangement of spatial organisation.

Low-scoring responses:

- did not include all elements of spatial organisation
- named or listed the elements of spatial organisation without any links to the movement vocabulary and/or expressive intention
- listed or mentioned movement vocabulary, but did not link it back to the any of the elements of spatial organisation and/or expressive intention
- discussed more than one movement example – that is, students made reference to a section of movement rather than a phrase
- discussed the expressive intention or aspect of the expressive intention in detail without making any direct links to the use of the four elements of spatial organisation or the expressive intention was only briefly mentioned or not stated at all.

The following is an example of a high-scoring response. The work being analysed is an excerpt from 'Mutton Bird' and 'People' from *Mathinna – A girl's journey between two cultures* by Stephen Page.

Spatial organisation can be seen in Mathinna through the phrase in which the females explore their individual connection to the land, as part of an aboriginal ritual. The phrase begins with the females sitting on a low level in stillness les crossed facing towards the bottom left corner. The use of low level shows the females involving themselves in the land through directly touching it to become as close as possible. The females display an indirect eye focus as they lower their heads to look downwards, and slide their arms out in a forward direction. They continue by sliding their hands further until they lay entirely flat over creating a small dimension with the shape of their body. The use of an inner focus alongside a small dimension shows the time they are taking to celebrate their personal connection to the land. The forwards direction as they reach out shows they are taking the journey and moving forward together in celebration of their culture.

Question 6

Marks	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Average
%	3	1	2	2	4	3	3	5	5	4	8	6	6	5	6	7	5	4	8	5	8	12

This question required students to discuss one example of movement vocabulary for each of the five group structures (symmetrical, asymmetrical, canon, unison and contrast) and demonstrate the choreographic use of each group structure. Different examples of movement vocabulary were required. Subheadings were provided to assist students to structure their response.

High-scoring responses comprehensively discussed one movement vocabulary example for each identified type of group structure and clearly demonstrated in detail the choreographic use. The movement vocabulary example described for each was different for each discussion.

Lower-scoring responses showed a limited understanding of the five types of group structures and the discussion of movement vocabulary and choreographic use was either not described in detail or lacked clarity.

Low-scoring responses:

- identified or listed the five types of group structures without any discussion or links to the movement vocabulary and/or their choreographic use
- discussed more than one movement example for each type of group structure
- listed or mentioned movement vocabulary but did not link it back to the identified group structure
- discussed the expressive intention in detail without making any direct links to the movement vocabulary or choreographic use of the identified group structure.

The following is an example of an excerpt from a high-scoring response. The work being analysed is an excerpt from *Swan Song* by Christopher Bruce. Note, for the purpose of this report the work discussed is different from Question 5. The examination required students to write on the same work for both Questions 5 and 6 as both these questions assessed Unit 4, Outcome 2, and students only study one work for that outcome.

Group structure 1: asymmetrical grouping

In the resolution section, one guard stands alone, gesturing while he watches the second guard hold the prisoner legs who is inverted in a balanced handstand on the only chair in the space. The dancers create an image in stillness. They are unevenly placed in the space, which creates an unbalanced placement or asymmetrical grouping/formation. The choreographic impact of this grouping is that the audience's attention is drawn strongly to the right hand side of the stage – Bruce gives the audience time to take in the meaning of the image which emphasises an escalating feeling of tension between the guards and the prisoner.